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THE QUESTION OF UNITY

MANY VOICES CONCERNING THE UNIFICATION
OF CHRISTENDOM.

EDITED BY
AMORY H. BRADFORD, D.D.

NEW YORK :
THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE CO.
1894.

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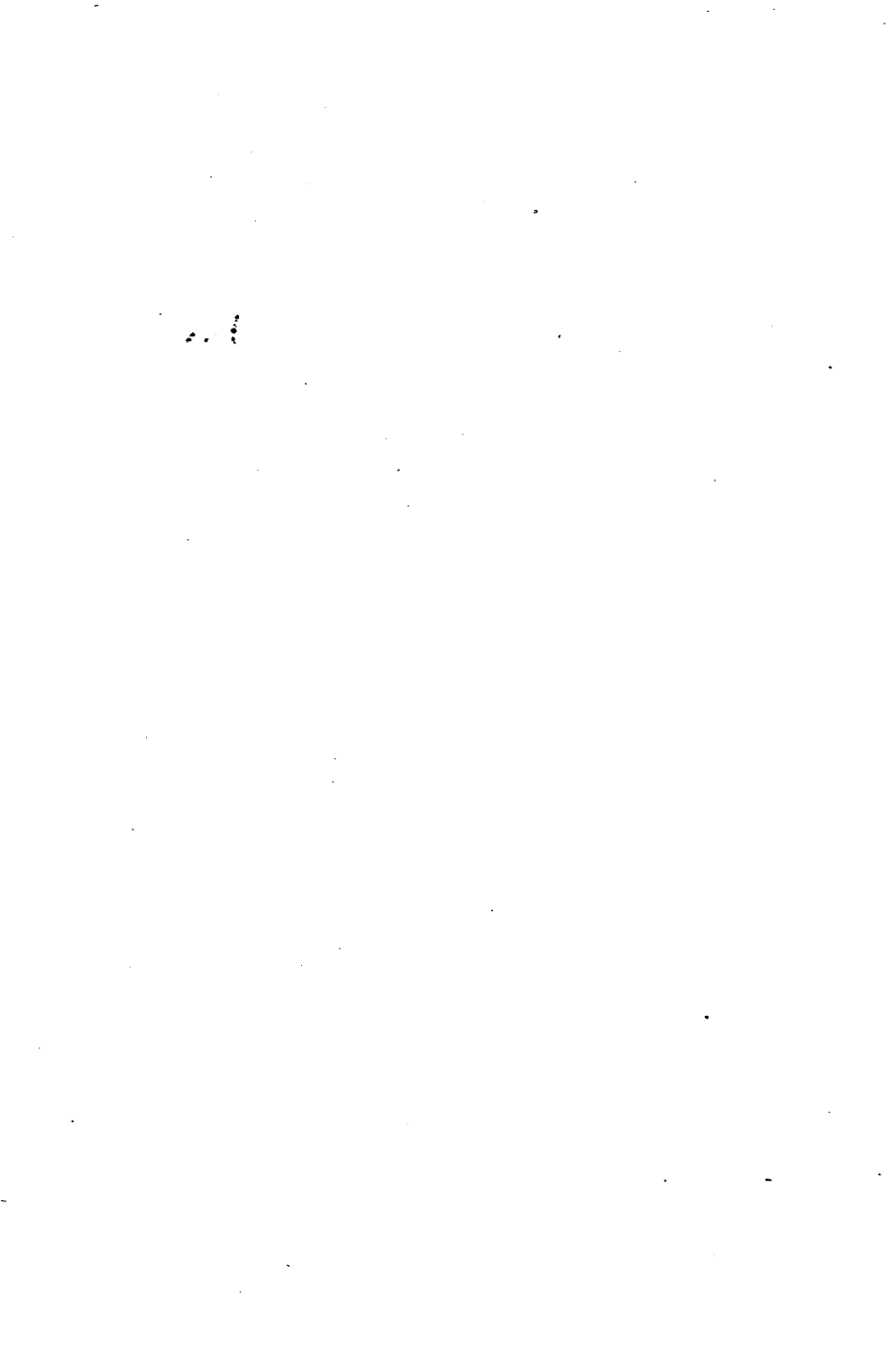
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PREFACE.

The great interest in the Christian world concerning the Unification of Christendom justifies the republication in this form of a series of articles which have already appeared in the pages of *Christian Literature and The Review of the Churches*. The occasion of their first publication was the appearance of a very remarkable monograph from the pen of the Rev. Charles W. Shields, D.D., professor in Princeton University. The title of Dr. Shields' paper was "The Historic Episcopate; an Essay on the Four Articles of Church Unity Proposed by the American House of Bishops and the Lambeth Conference."

It will be seen that some of the articles in this book discuss Dr. Shields' positions, and some of them the subject of Church Union in its larger relations. Simultaneously with the appearance of these articles there appeared in *The Independent*, of New York, a symposium in which most of the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States took part. The special question proposed to them concerned the exchange of pulpits with other denominations as one step toward Church Union. With the greatest unanimity they declared that such a course was impossible. Not all the Bishops responded, and we think it not unfair in this case to infer that failure to respond is evidence of disagreement with those whose opinions were made public. But however that may be, and while we fully believe that many of the ablest and most influential clergymen and laymen

of that denomination would not agree with their Bishops, there can be no doubt but what their utterances have caused a wide-spread distrust of the feasibility of Church Union on the basis of the Chicago-Lambeth Articles. That distrust may be well founded or unfounded, but it exists. To be perfectly plain, we say that if the Unification of Christendom on the basis of the famous "Quadri-lateral" is desirable, the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church have made such union impossible for many more years than would have been required for its realization if they had not spoken at all, or had spoken differently. Many who had been half converted by the logic and "sweet reasonableness" of Dr. Shields have had his work all undone by what seems to them the assumption of ecclesiastical omniscience on the part of the Bishops. For ourselves, we do not believe that the Bishops speak for the whole Episcopal Church. We rather believe that a large, growing and influential minority, whose best representative in recent years has been Bishop Brooks, are far more catholic and irenic than those who have spoken for their Church.

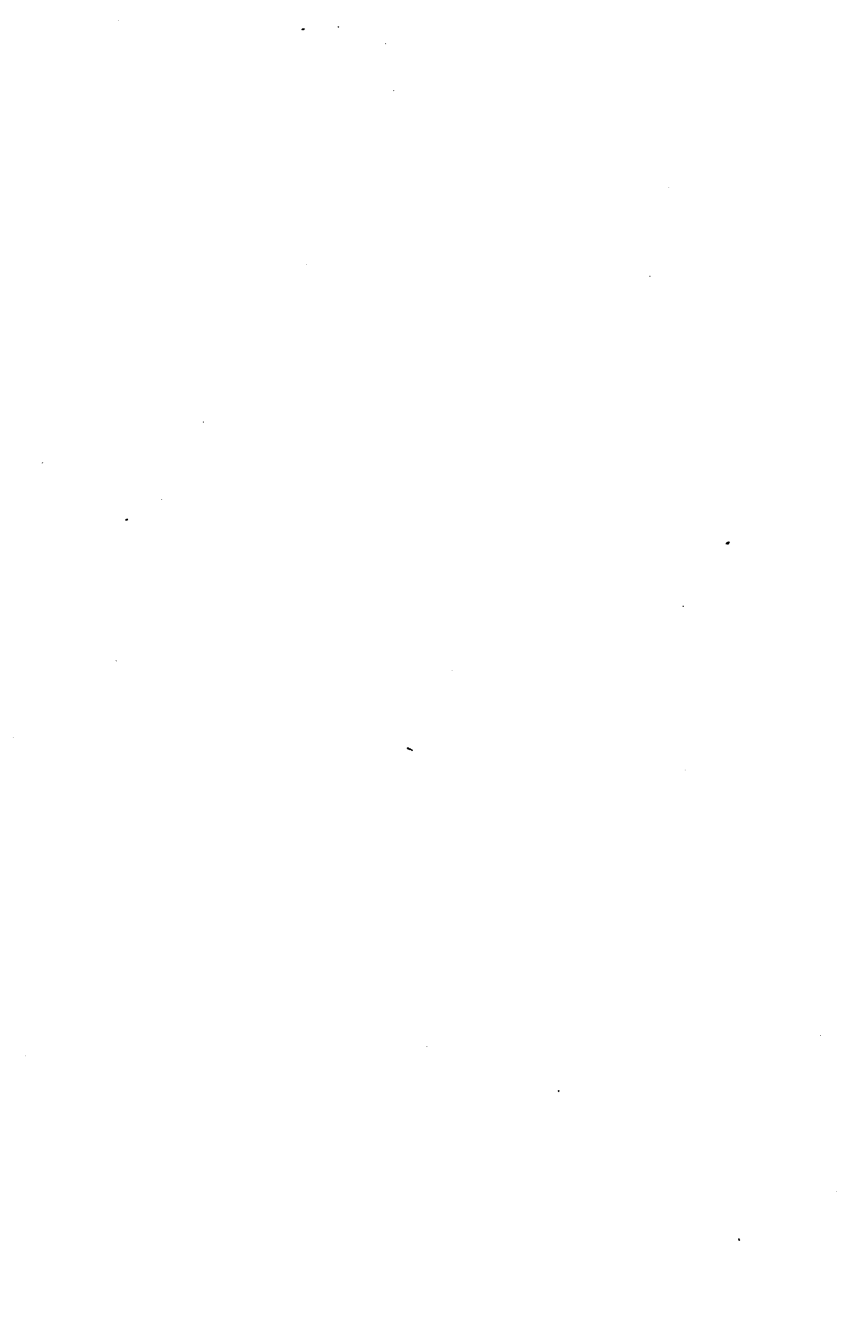
But the cause which has thus been wounded in the house of its friends is not dead, and those who do not accept the Historic Episcopate are by no means to be considered as satisfied with a divided Christendom; and they are not discouraged even though no definite plan looking toward union may at present commend itself to their judgment. The ways of Providence can seldom be predicted. The Divine life manifests itself according to its own laws. The old question of Paul to the Corinthians echoes in our ears—"Is Christ divided?" In some way the divisions in our Lord's body will

be healed, and they will be healed only by life. Much study of this subject has confirmed the opinion that while "propositions" and "plans" looking toward Church Union are desirable and do more or less good, it is good of a negative kind. They show where the goal we seek is not to be found. When all men have Christ; when they can truly say that they no more live but Christ lives in them, unity will come naturally and inevitably. Christ cannot be divided. Where division is, He is not; where He is, division is not.

In the meantime this booklet is offered to the public in the hope that these "Many Voices" may help a little in turning the thought of the Church away from human mechanisms and directing it toward Him in whom Christians *are* one. He is the fountain of spiritual life, and from Him alone can come the unity for which we hunger.

AMORY H. BRADFORD.

First Congregational Church,
Montclair, N. J.



MANY VOICES CONCERNING DR. SHIELDS' BOOK.

"THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE."

Amory H. Bradford, D. D. (Congregational).

In this number of *THE REVIEW OF THE CHURCHES* is presented to our readers what we think they will recognize as a very remarkable series of articles. More than at any time in recent years, and perhaps than ever before, the question of the reunion, or unification of Christendom, is before the minds and on the hearts of Christian people. It is easy to understand why this subject has assumed such importance. Two at least of our religious bodies have made distinct overtures looking toward this end. The Bishops of the American Episcopal Church and of the Anglican Church have united in putting forth the four propositions which are known as the Chicago-Lambeth Articles; and the Church of the Disciples of Christ has issued its declaration as to what is essential to Christian unity. The latter may be condensed as follows: The union of Christendom on the basis of "The primitive Creed," namely, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" "The Primitive Sacraments;" Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; and "The Primitive Life," or the life

that was in Christ. The Chicago-Lambeth Articles are as follows:

"I. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as 'containing all things necessary to salvation,' and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

"II. The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient standard of the Christian faith.

"III. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ himself: Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

"IV. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church."

It would be too much to presume that the publication of these suggestions have created the interest which now exists in this subject, for the interest itself inspired the publication of the articles. It is idle to try to conceal the fact that there is a widespread and deep-seated dissatisfaction with the present constitution of the Christian Church and the mode of its administration. Those who assume the championship of the Church as an institution try to laugh this feeling down, or, still worse, to put it down by the use of hard names. Some men who are not Christians have denounced the Church, and it is straightway presumed that all who criticise are going into their company; but there is a vast difference between the denunciation of enemies and the criticism of friends—the one proceeds from enmity; the other is the truest indication of loyalty. It is now several years since the Chicago-Lambeth

Articles were given to the world, and they have steadily attracted increased attention. We do not propose at this time to discuss these articles. They are sufficiently referred to in the communications which follow. Suffice it to say that among the most notable papers on this subject in recent years is one by the Rev. Charles W. Shields, D.D., professor in Princeton University. Dr. Shields has already won a distinguished position because of his contributions to philosophical and theological literature. Anything which comes from his pen is sure to be received with attention and read with appreciation. This paper, which he has delivered before many representative bodies, has been published by the Scribners, and is now in a form in which it may be read by all. Dr. Shields' main contention is that the reunion of Christendom is possible only on the basis of the Historic Episcopate, and yet he does not advocate a mechanical union, but clearly recognizes that the unity for which he pleads must be the result of long processes of growth. We leave Dr. Shields to speak for himself to those who are wise enough to read his little book. We desire, however, to call attention to two or three facts in connection with this subject which seem to us of great importance. First: The fact that our churches are so largely rivals rather than friends and allies is a shame and disgrace. It misrepresents our Christian life, and gives, in many communities at least, a totally false impression of what our Master teaches and is. Work which could be well done if all were united is neglected because of division. Second: The missionary boards of all our churches are issuing piteous appeals in behalf of their treasuries, when if there were co-operation instead of

competition there would be money enough in the treasuries and men enough for all the pulpits. There is no need of more churches in the United States. Dr. Carroll, in his tables of statistics, has shown that there are churches enough for all the people. And yet because we are denominationlists rather than Christians we are wasting money, keeping our treasuries depleted, issuing appeals for contributions which really are not much needed. Third: The denominations have ceased to have any vital differences. If we select three or four, and ask for what they distinctly stand we find that they do not represent anything essential. For instance, the Congregationalists represent the independence of the local church, and the right of each man to form his own opinions, led by the Spirit of God. The Baptists especially emphasize the importance of the "believers' baptism," the Presbyterians the Westminster doctrines, and the Episcopalians the Historic Episcopate. Now as a matter of fact not one of these has any vital relation to the work of the salvation of men or is even understood by most converts. They do not need to be mentioned when we are leading men to Christ. Furthermore we all acknowledge by our example that they are of secondary importance. Churches often co-operate; ministers preach in each other's pulpits, and all work together enough to show that we do not hold as vital the things which distinguish us. The majority of our people practically say that they do not care very much for the fences which separate the sects. Our local churches are made up of members of almost all denominations. Most city and suburban pastors would testify that they receive members from various communions into

their fellowship, and that often those who are the most efficient have come from other denominations than those in which they are working. These are singular and serious facts. They ought not to be evaded, and their significance cannot be exaggerated. The Christian people are in advance of their leaders. They are pushing on toward unity faster than those whom they are supposed to follow. Moreover, there is abroad an unwonted interest in the affairs of the Kingdom, and men are finding that they can work together for the kingdom of God when they are not able to agree upon any sect. Consequently there is growing up, so to speak, a church outside the church, which is doing the work of Christ and presenting the very essence of Christianity to those who are longing for pure and undefiled religion. This tendency is seen in the various charities, in the Young Men's Christian Association, in the so-called "labor churches," in the "Bible readings" in many of the lodges, and in different ways not commonly discovered.

When we come to a discussion of the question of the remedy for our divided Christendom the difficulty begins. The most earnest Christians recognize the evils, but few are willing to make the sacrifices necessary in order that those evils may be remedied; indeed, perhaps as yet we hardly know what sacrifices are best for us to make. For ourselves we are not satisfied with the Chicago-Lambeth Articles. We do not see how they are likely to produce anything more than a formal unity. The real difficulty is in our imperfect appreciation of the teachings of Christ. We import our own personalities into the circle which belongs to Him alone. When He reigns supreme, and His principle of self-sacrifice for the good of

the Kingdom prevails, there will be as much effort on the part of denominations to give up non-essentials for the general welfare as there must always be among individual Christians. When individuals are unloving, formal declarations of harmony are to little purpose. The divisions may be disguised, but they will be deep and vital. The unification of Christendom is not to be promoted by the advocacy of any form of polity. That is, beginning from the outside and working inward, whereas the process should be that which was always emphasized by our Master—making the heart right in order that the life may be. We are aware that these are commonplaces, and yet the more we study this question the more fully are we convinced that expedients looking toward union are all likely to fail unless they begin with the recognition that denominational selfishness is as wicked as individual selfishness; that nothing is made good by being done in the name of the Lord, when the spirit tends to defeat that which He is trying to do.

When His work is supreme everything else will be of comparatively little importance, and we shall not ask concerning Baptism or the Episcopate or Independency or special speculative doctrines, but only, how may His work be advanced? We are inclined to think that those writers who are lifting "the Kingdom" into greater prominence are working in the line most likely to help in the realization of the end which we so much covet. Work for *churches* is not always work for the *Kingdom*. That which promotes sectarianism inevitably tends to defeat the Kingdom. The Master spoke of the Church but twice; with Him the Kingdom was everything. We have too long

given the first place to that which He made of comparatively little importance. To be sure the Apostles more frequently referred to the Church, but never in a way which indicates that the Kingdom is to be interpreted by the Church. Christ's use of the words indicates that the Church is always to be interpreted by the Kingdom. The more we think of the Kingdom as the end, and the Church as only an instrument for its advancement, and that that instrument is best which best does the work for which it is designed, the more swiftly the Kingdom will be advanced and the union for which we pray be realized.

Concerning the series of articles which follow, we may be permitted to say that we had hoped to present a few other papers from representative men who were prevented at the last moment from furnishing them. Two or three of the following communications are very short, like those from Dr. Cuyler and Dr. George R. Crooks. Professor Crooks had hoped to furnish a longer article, but was prevented from doing so. This we regret the more because he is the only representative of the Methodist Church who responded to our appeal. The article by the Rev. William Hayes Ward, D.D., was especially prepared for this REVIEW, but is with our consent published simultaneously in *The Independent*, of which he is the editor.

As we read the articles which follow one fact especially impresses us, and that is, that the Chicago-Lambeth propositions are not understood by other denominations. We are not convinced that union is possible by means of them, but we gladly recognize that they are issued in the most catholic and fraternal spirit, and we can see

clearly that the prominence which they give to the Historic Episcopate is not because it distinguishes the Episcopal Church, but because in the opinion of the Bishops it belongs to the universal Church of Christ. They hold, and we believe consistently, that there is nothing in it antagonistic to either Congregationalism or Presbyterianism. These propositions are worthy of a more careful consideration than they have yet received from the various denominations of Christians in Great Britain and America. If Professor Shields had done nothing else he would have performed a great service in behalf of the cause so dear to his heart by bringing into clear relief the exact meaning of the Chicago-Lambeth Articles.

We cannot close this word of introduction without expressing our hearty appreciation of the general and gracious response to our invitation to so many representative men to furnish the readers of this REVIEW with their opinions concerning this most important subject. Their replies show that our Lord's prayer concerning the oneness of all who accept Him is far from being answered, and yet that the day of its realization has surely dawned.

A. H. BRADFORD.

**W. R. Huntington, D.D. (Episcopalian),
Rector of Grace Church, New York.**

If Dr. Shields had done nothing more than coin his felicitous phrase, "The United Church of the United States," he would have put the whole country in his debt. A telling cry is more than half the battle, and commonly the cry tells just in proportion to the distinctness with which it describes the object sought. To a far greater extent than is commonly supposed, the endurance of our national life hinges on our achievement of church unity. The American Commonwealth stands committed to the principle that a people can be trusted to govern itself. This is a profoundly Christian postulate, but what makes it such is the fact that behind it lies another, namely, the presupposition that the people in question has a hearty desire to know and a settled resolve to do what is right; or, in other words, that the national life is penetrated and informed by the Holy Spirit. History records no instance in which "popular institutions" that had not this religious backing have long survived. Our country started out on its course equipped with a Christian conscience. If it is to keep that conscience and continue on the lines of civic righteousness, it must have an effective administration of religion. All the "problems" that beset us, the school problem, the slum problem, the hill-town problem, the foreign missionary problem, make this necessary. The question occurs, Is religion, as a matter of fact, effectively administered in any

country when it exhibits the piebald aspect under which the Christianity of the United States stands revealed in the census of 1890? Are the strong minds of a young and adventurous nation into which alien blood is pouring itself at an unprecedented rate, likely to be held loyal to the faith of the fathers by listening to the competitive voices of one hundred and forty claimants shouting out, like so many cabmen on the curbstone, their willingness to carry us to Heaven?

Dr. Shields thinks not, and tersely suggests by way of contrast and remedy—not a State Church (that would be the last thing which he or any sensible Christian would in these disestablishing days desire), but the United Church of the United States.

But, over and above his battle-cry, Dr. Shields, with the instinct of wise leadership, has given us what is still better—a plan of campaign. The importance of the monograph in which this plan of campaign is outlined can scarcely be exaggerated. Were it the production of a Protestant Episcopalian, it would probably, notwithstanding its high literary merits, fail of a hearing; for although the Anglican charmer has been long piping upon these shores, the people have as yet shown no very ready mind to dance.

Coming, as it does, however, from a Presbyterian divine, a man widely known as a student of theology, a writer on philosophy and an expert in historical science, this plea for the acceptance of the Chicago-Lambeth Declaration as the likeliest stepping-stone towards the unification of American Christianity simply cannot pass unheeded. Precisely such a note has not hitherto enforced itself upon our Babel.

If I were asked to say which I thought at once the strongest and the most suggestive of the twenty-six *capitula* into which Dr. Shields has broken up his essay, I should unhesitatingly fasten upon the one entitled *The Unifying Power of the Episcopate*. In this portion of his argument, Dr. Shields shows a largeness of view and breadth of sympathy which some of the more noisy of the champions of Episcopal prerogative within the Anglican lines might wisely emulate.

It is here that his *ab extra* point of view helps him amazingly. He holds no brief for the "P. E. Church." Heaven forbid!—he is simply looking, in a judicial temper, at the needs of our American Christendom, and thinking that he sees in what way the Historic Episcopate might conceivably minister to those needs; he gives his reasons for being of that mind.

Here are some of his points:

1st. It (the Historic Episcopate) is the *de facto* government of three-fourths, if not of four-fifths, of Christendom.

2d. It bases church unity upon church polity, not upon systematic theology.

3d. In its structure, it involves, in due organic relation, the Congregational, the Presbyterian and the Episcopal elements.

He makes other points equally interesting in the course of the chapter. But I pause at this third one, because it illustrates, in a striking way, what is called in the Lambeth Articles, the adaptation of the Episcopate to "the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."

As a matter of fact, this blending of the Congregational and Presbyterian elements with episcopacy pure and simple never, after the rise of the Papacy,

had anything like an adequate embodiment until it found one in the system established in this country a hundred years ago, under the combined and mutually modifying influences of the high-church Seabury and the low-church White.

That it does not exist at the present day in England under the Establishment, is well shown in the following utterance of one of the lay speakers at the recent Birmingham Church Congress:

"We have," said Mr. Philip Vernon Smith, a London barrister, "too little power of self-government, but in a re-united church we should, as a necessary accompaniment of reunion, obtain, co-ordinate with and subordinate to the rightful functions of the Episcopacy, the legalization of something of the elastic Wesleyan methods as regards services and evangelistic work; something of Congregational principles as regards the rights of congregations and parishioners to regulate, in part, their own church affairs; and something of the Presbyterian system of self-government."

It is not as generally known as it ought to be that two out of the three *desiderata* upon which this English churchman lays so much stress, have been associated with the Historic Episcopate in the United States from the first day until now.

This fact makes strongly in favor of that method of crystallization about an existing nucleus, that acceptance of one of our present denominations as a rallying center, which, under the name of "unification by consolidation," Dr. Shields gently but firmly disallows.

And yet, when we come to the essayist's own doctrine as to the way in which the Historic Episcopate is to be made useful in the working out of unity, it seems to lack that very element of definiteness which the consolidation theory

supplies. His name for the method which he himself favors is, "Unification by organic growth." But how can "organic growth" so much as begin until we find some *ridus* for the germ, some definite furrow of mother earth into which the corn of wheat may be cast? The case of the air-plant is exceptional. Some point of actual contact must, as a rule, be found between seed and soil, between a theory and an existing condition of things, before any visible result can follow.

Dr. Shields hints at receiving the Episcopate from a Roman Catholic, from a Moravian, from a Swedish source; but if the Episcopate of the race which gave us our language, and at least a good fraction of our law, were to be proffered to the Christian people of this land in the spirit and temper which pervade this monograph, all being frankly and ungrudgingly conceded which the Lambeth Articles concede, "consolidation" would no longer be the far-away and unattainable goal which it looks to Dr. Shields; rather, he would say to the Episcopal Church, as many of her own children are saying to her now, in the words of Charles Gore, "Promote reunion by being such a church as may make all Christian men desire thy fellowship."

In any view of the matter, Dr. Shields deserves our reverence, our confidence and our gratitude. May he live to be a bishop in the United Church of the United States, ruling by aid of a Presbyterian synod the several localized congregations of his parish, a shepherd of souls loving, and loved by, not a beggarly fraction of the sheep in his vicinity, but the whole flock thereabouts pastured. This will be the Historic Episcopate brought back to its historic beginnings. W. R. HUNTINGTON.

J. H. Esch, D.D. (Presbyterian), Albany,
New York.

Why federation and not union at once? men ask impatiently. I answer for the same reason that we have "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." No one proposes federation as a finality, but only as an easy first step.

Federation is suggested as the first process in the evolution of union. There must first be the true living desire for union. This, I believe it is safe to affirm, does already exist in sufficient volume and energy to warrant some practical movement toward the desired end. How shall we begin, at the point of greatest resistance or at the point of least resistance? Evidently the latter. Yet nearly every proposition looking toward Christian union begins at the point of greatest resistance. The various solemn flirtations with the Episcopal denomination would be laughable if the subject involved were not so sacred. That denomination is the most poorly equipped of any of the Protestant sects for the work of the union. Its unyielding, uncompromising Episcopate presents the point of greatest resistance at the very outset. I have never yet seen even a hint from that quarter that proposed any concession at that point. Union? Yes, my dearlybeloved brethren, by all means, all of you become good Episcopalians and the thing is done in a trice, and the doxology is in order. Another point of great resistance meets us in proposing union with the Baptist denomination. One man among them

voices what is practically the feeling of all. "Every word of Baptist doctrine (referring to immersion) is infallibly true." The Baptists, therefore, are compelled by their doctrine, as the Episcopalians are by their polity, to demand that we must gain Christian union by going over bodily to them. All the large denominations present the same inertia or active resistance.

The pride of history, wealth, numbers; a sharply defined system of doctrine, a hard and fast polity, present a barricade bristling with points of resistance. The cause of Christian union is indefinitely postponed by footballing the subject back and forth by denominations that do not sincerely desire Christian union, do not feel an inward need of it, and which are constitutionally incapacitated for it. If I were to undertake a campaign in behalf of the unity of Christian nations, I would not begin with France and Germany.

What then? Why, plainly, the work must begin with the smaller, younger denominations, and with those which are nearest alike in doctrine and polity. And with these again we must seek the point of least resistance, which is federation. Our hearts are so slow and dark toward the spiritualities involved, and besides, there are so many obstacles in the way of property, trust-funds, colleges, boards, papers and salaried officers that union must come at last through a process of elimination and amalgamation. That process is federation. Our national life is a complete picture of the process. First came the sense of need for a closer relationship of the colonies, both on account of the evils of separate life and the advantages of closer relations. Then

came federation. Each colony was still jealous of its rights, surrendering as little as possible to the common federated life. But they placed themselves in the historic process of fusion, and every hour was moving them on toward that goal. Common wants, common needs, common dangers multiplied, till at last the conviction was forced home, "United we stand, divided we fall." The full sense of one indivisible national life came to us only after the terrific heats and the volcanic shakings of the Civil War. We are now a Union. I pray God that no such long and fierce historic process may await His Church. J. H. ECOB.

Rev. David N. Beach (Congregational),
Cambridge, Mass.

Prof. Shields' remarkable paper has been read before several circles with which I am conversant, and, apparently, in each instance, with the same result. My opportunity of hearing it was at the Diocesan House, Boston, last Spring. There was present a large company of Episcopal clergymen. Besides these there was quite a circle of invited guests. From the first sentence the paper compelled attention. This deepened, and glowed, and became luminous as the paper proceeded. The broad, clear definitions, the comprehensive grasp of argument, the wide reading and surprising learning, the discriminating and critical faculty, the effective but restrained humor, the sustained earnestness, the mighty cumulative force, the passionate but sober march to conclusions,—united in a climax of strong, intellectual persuasion and almost breathless expectancy when the paper closed. Here at length was a man's work. Here was a grasp of the very heart of the matter. Not some pleasing generalities, some benevolent but valueless suggestions, some weak delineation of how not to do it,—but a real grapple with the great problem. This the more impressed those present because of the gravity, the caution, the absence of easy optimism, and the strong apprehension of difficulties, which characterized the paper. "It marks an epoch," whispered one. "The like has not been heard in New England," exclaimed another, And when discussion was on,

notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, it was obvious how in the burning, religious passion of one, the thoughts of many hearts had been revealed.

It has seemed to me that, in describing the paper's reception in such a company as that indicated, I could do more to bring before the reader's mind the significance of Prof. Shields' work, than in any remarks of my own. In the limited space still permitted me, I desire to make three points:

1. Prof. Shields' paper does strong work at the start in indicating the insufficiency and futility of ordinary church unity schemes; and in maintaining that something organic, specific and federative, in a very unifying sense, must now come forward to be discussed, if the subject is further to be pursued with advantage or even with intellectual self-respect.

2. This general position—for, of course, I am not quoting the Professor's propositions in a single particular—has under it the tremendous vital force of a deeply stirred hunger and yearning after unity throughout large sections of Christendom. I am very confident that the intensity of this hunger is very much minimized by many persons who write upon the subject. Age, or large learning, or conspicuous position, or lives far too busy, or like causes, conspire, I am persuaded, to hinder many of those who have the public ear on this matter from realizing the intensity of this soul's cry of our time. The new education, the new science, the new philosophy, the new grasp of our age on essentials and on reality, carry such a cry with them as an inevitable intellectual corollary. To the eye that has had even a faint foregleam of the coming unities,—schism

and separation, above all in concerns the most fundamental, are a contradiction, and an impertinence. One has but to reside at a great university center for a time to sense this unspeakably.

3. The great strength of Prof. Shields' position consists in its implication that the germs of unity lie potentially in our diversities ; that there is a trend of type in them which must return to unity ; and that the seers of this movement have but to look well into the mighty life that pulses forward, notwithstanding schism, for the clews and prophecies of the coming unity. The fact, for example, that there are three great Protestant types, practically inclusive in principle of all Protestant polities,—the type which emphasizes the rule of the congregation, the type which does the same by the elders or Presbytery, and the type which does the same by the overseers or bishops,—and the fact that in the old communion all of these types were potentially present, and did each but need more thorough articulation, is a tremendous and pregnant consideration.

Let no one fail to read the Professor's paper, and may it do for the wide English-speaking peoples what its oral utterance has accomplished for hundreds of devout souls!

D. N. BEACH.

**B. B. Tyler, D.D. (Disciples of Christ),
New York.**

That Prof. Shields should have been invited to read his paper on *The Historic Episcopate* as one of the planks in a proposed platform of church unity before audiences of Roman Catholics and Protestants in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, is a significant fact. But yet more significant is the fact that this essay should now be given to the public "in answer to many requests for its publication" by such a house as that of Charles Scribner's Sons. "The growth of public interest in the question" of union, "during the past ten years has," indeed, "been surprising." This increasing public interest is manifested in many ways and on every hand. Good men are coming more and more to see "the absolute need of harmony and unity in order to establish the supremacy" of the Christian religion in all the earth.

Believers are exhorted in the New Testament to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ep. 4: 3). Those who are called saints are told to mark and avoid those who cause divisions (Rom. 16: 17, 18). Members of the Church of God are besought to speak the same things and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1: 10). Divisions among those who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord are evidences of remaining carnality (1 Cor. 3: 1-4). The Christ prayed that His personal friends and followers

might be united as the Father and Son are one (John 17:11). And this prayer was answered, for we read that after the Lord had been received up into Heaven His friends returned from the place of the ascension to an upper room in Jerusalem, where they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14), until "the day of Pentecost was fully come," when "suddenly they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The Christ also prayed for all who would believe in Him through the testimony of those whom He ordained to be His witnesses "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts. 1:8), that they might be one, "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:20,21). And this prayer also received an answer in the Apostolic Age, for we read that "the multitude" of those who "believed" in Jesus, as the Son of God, in Jerusalem, "were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32), and that as a result of this unity "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). The Holy Spirit places sectarianism in a category with adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, contention, envy, murder and drunkenness (Gal. 5:20). All these things, sectarianism and the rest, belong to the flesh and are opposed to the good Spirit of our God. On the contrary, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (Gal. 6:22,23).

There can be no reasonable doubt as to the desire of the head of the body, Jesus Christ our

Lord, concerning the relation in which His disciples should stand toward Himself, and toward one another.

The effort of Prof. Shields is to contribute to the production of this relation.

His contention, however (p. 4), "that Christian unity, spiritual oneness, already exists as a divine fundamental fact in the churches," is only true in part. Where this unity exists as a fact, fully, there will be no "problem" as to "how to express this Christian unity." In some way such a unity will find an appropriate expression. The paramount difficulty with many of us who call ourselves Christians is that like those who were denominated "Saints" in Corinth, we are "carnal and walk as men." (1 Cor. 3: 1-4).

Instead of saying that the unity for which the Christ prayed "rests upon an institution, not upon doctrines" (p. 36), why not say that it rests upon a person? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 3: 11). And St. Paul was discussing this very subject when he made that statement.

I confess my inability to understand what is meant by "The Historic Episcopate." I know the nature of the Episcopate spoken of in the New Testament—is *that* "the Historic Episcopate?"

Prof. Shields tells us (p. 3) that in the "one Catholic Apostolic Church, of 'the first century,' we have an example and model of church unity." He also says truly that the "Ministry and the Sacraments are revealed in the Scriptures."

Our author says (p. 9), that we may *not* "hope to find all Christians at once becoming Baptists, or Congregationalists, or Methodists, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, or Romanists." True.

But cannot all who love Christ, for the sake of unity, agree to be *only* Christians? Dr. Shields exhorts us (p. 14) to "go back to the experience of early Christian society." "In that *first* organization of the Church," he says, "we see Congregational, Presbyterial, Episcopal institutions, but no separate Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational denominations." "We behold all our unhappy divisions dwelling together in one undivided Apostolic church." True enough! Then why insist on one idea of church order and organization as *non* essential to union? "What the Church has been once, may it not be again?" I think that it may, and so labor and pray for the union of believers by a return to Christianity as it was before it was corrupted by the wisdom of men—its creed, its ordinances, and its simple spiritual life.

B. B. TYLER.

**Josiah Strong, D.D. (Secretary of the
Evangelical Alliance), New York.**

I had planned to hear Dr. Shields' lecture, concerning whose position you ask my impressions, but was unable to do so. His position, however, I understand to be this, that Christian union is impossible, except on the basis of the Historic Episcopate.

It is to be hoped that Dr. Shields has not demonstrated the truth of his position, as in that case many who now hope for Christian union would have to despair of it.

There are among our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal Church two views of the Historic Episcopate, *first*, that it is essential to valid orders and legitimate organization, and *second*, that it is desirable, but not essential.

As I understand it, the first view is based on the doctrine that the divine grace flows through the one to the many, hence the necessity of a priesthood. This is the Roman Catholic doctrine, from which the position of the Congregationalists and Baptists is removed precisely one hundred and eighty degrees. They hold that the divine grace comes to the many—to every soul that will accept of it—and that authority is, therefore, derived by the one from the many, not by the many from the one. Every Christian is, therefore, a priest unto God. The clergyman is no more a priest than the layman. He differs from the layman only in the functions assigned him, his authority for

the discharge of which he derives from the many—the laity.

Evidently this position is diametrically opposed to that of those who deem the Historic Episcopate essential to the validity of clerical orders and of church organization. There can be no possibility of compromise between them. The only alternative to conflict is unconditional surrender; and Baptists and Congregationalists could not surrender so vital a point without deeming themselves disloyal to the truth, which is true also of all non-Episcopal churches.

Said Dr. Schaff in his last message to the churches (the Reunion of Christendom, pp. 21, 23), "The 'Historic Episcopate' is the stumbling-block to all non-Episcopalians, and will never be conceded by them as a condition of church unity, if it is understood to mean the necessity of three orders of the ministry, and of Episcopal ordination in unbroken historic succession. . . . The non-Episcopal churches will never un-church themselves, and cast reproach on their ministry. They will negotiate with the Episcopal Church only on the basis of equality, and a recognition of the validity of their ministry. Each denomination must offer its ideal on the altar of reunion." The sooner the truth of these words is generally recognized, the sooner shall we make substantial progress toward Christian union.

If, on the other hand, the Historic Episcopate is presented as the basis of Christian union, not as *essential*, but only as *desirable*, the question at once arises: Why make that essential to the organization of all churches into one, which is conceded to be unessential to the legitimate organization of any?

Such a position cannot be successfully defended as a *sine qua non* to church union.

It seems to me, therefore, that the Historic Episcopate, instead of being "the only possible basis of union," is the great obstacle to the union of Protestant churches. I look for organic union, but along entirely different lines.

Yours faithfully,

JOSIAH STRONG

Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D. (Presbyterian),
Brooklyn, New York.

To a symposium a man ought only to contribute his matured thought. But while I have a good many "irons in the fire," yet this "Historic Episcopate" business of my old and brilliant Princeton fellow-student has never got in * * * * * My observation is that while bigoted sectarianism is dying out (except among the extreme High Church Episcopalians), yet denominational *esprit du corps* is about as strong as ever. If men don't work in their denominational lines, they don't work much anywhere. Christian Unity I go for; Church Unity on any basis looks like an "iridescent dream" at present.

THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Henry A. Stimson, D.D. (Congregational),
New York.

Prof. Shields' essay on "Historic Episcopacy" is interesting reading, whatever views one may have of church unity, or whatever convictions one may hold as to the method by which it is eventually to be attained. So irenic a paper, like the genial spirit of the chief advocate of the movement within the American Episcopal Church, Dr. W. R. Huntington, goes far to remove prejudice and to prepare the way for accepting the desired conclusion. The great difficulty seems to be to hit upon some method of union, which, starting from the present situation, will make sure a result that will stand. At present each of the chief prophets of the movement sees insuperable difficulties in the plan proposed by his confreres. Prof. Briggs' theory is a "mere confederation," and Dr. Huntington's theory is a "mere absorption" in the eyes of Prof. Shields', while, in turn, the latter's theory of organic growth seems to involve, on the part of all, that surrender of existing institutions and ignoring of past history which would make it difficult of acceptance by any one. His view of the unifying power of the Episcopate is attractive and plausible, but in the light of the centuries lying between the early Church and the great Reformation, with their endless controversies and fatal feuds, seems hardly to give promise of power to introduce a permanent state of peace. The Lambeth Articles, whatever ultimate end they may serve in bringing about

Christian unity, are accomplishing one good in enabling all Christians to clarify and adjust their own views of Christian truth and in helping some bodies of Christians who are to-day exceptionally exclusive, to get a new light upon their attitude toward their fellows. Perhaps, when the exclusive spirit which has led some bearing the Christian name to be intolerant and supercilious has given place to a recognition of the true brotherhood and the equality of standing of all believers before the Lord, and to a plane of common Christian service, the Lambeth Articles may be found to serve a good purpose as the beginning of negotiations for church unity. When that day comes any proposition, put forth from any source, will serve the purpose of introducing a discussion which would be very sure to lead to both unity and peace. Meanwhile the discussion may well go on with all possible interest in those denominational bodies where particular exclusiveness prevails, and those who within such circles are giving themselves to the good cause should have the cordial approval and cheerful support of all who stand outside waiting and watching for the result, with gratitude to God.

HENRY A. STIMSON.

H. V. Satterlee, D.D. (Episcopalian),
New York.

It seems paradoxical to assert that an essay is too valuable to be published, and yet this paradox has been exemplified in the case of an essay upon Church Unity which was written a year ago by the Rev. Dr. Shields, the distinguished Presbyterian Divine and Professor in Princeton University. This paper has been read by Dr. Shields before the collected clergy of various Christian bodies, as also before mixed assemblies of ministers of all denominations, including Roman Catholics, and at each successive reading some of those present requested that it might be delivered by the Professor himself to another clerical meeting before its publication.

The essay has now appeared in print, and it will undoubtedly prove to be one of the most important contributions to church unity that has yet appeared. No synopsis of its contents can give any adequate idea of its value, for the different parts are so correlated and carefully balanced that each must be heard to appreciate the force of the combined whole. Dr. Shields begins by distinguishing church unity from Christian unity, or the Oneness of all believers in Christ. The one is subjective, the other is objective; the first is spiritual, the second is organic, and only by a confusion of thought can they be regarded as identical. Yet the writer emphasizes the fact that the former must precede the latter. And in this he is following the lead of Christ Himself. Unity must begin

at God, not at Man; it must work downward from what is highest, not upward from what is beneath; and our Lord in His High Priestly Prayer for His Church (St. John XVII) prays (1) that His disciples may know His Oneness with the Father, (2) that they may be One with Him, and (3) that they be One with each other.

As Dr. Shields points out, the first part of our Lord's Prayer is already answered, at least so far as all Evangelical denominations are concerned, and later on he adds that evidence of its fulfilment is already to be seen in the general agreement regarding the doctrine of the Trinity and the facts of Christ's life as they are set forth in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds. Furthermore, all intelligent Christian observers will agree with him when he says that to-day and especially in America, the tendency to sect-making and division has gone, and that "the spirit of unity itself is seizing Christian masses like a passion, and carrying their wrangling leaders along with them as with the might of a revolution. Never before in any Christian century, nowhere else in any Christian country have all the conditions been so favorable for realizing the long-lost ideal of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Then, rehearsing the several claims of the historic churches, and of the reformed churches, in words that must be read to be appreciated, he points out the need of a practical consensus, and says that the only practical plan for an actual existing consensus of the churches which will be comprehensive and, at the same time, elastic enough to unite the various bodies of Christendom without eliminating those distinctive features of faith and practice which each holds

dear, is the basis for Christian unity set forth by the bishops of the Anglican Church in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. "This practical quality of the Episcopal declaration," writes Dr. Shields, "is one of its chief merits. In its very nature it is a unifying manifesto. It exhibits to the world the great things in which Christian bodies can agree, and exalts them above the small things in which they differ. Each of the four articles, the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments, the Episcopate, will be found to serve this purpose as successively stated." Then, after showing how true this is regarding the first three articles, he adds: "The Historic Episcopate is everywhere adaptable to Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians of every type, as well as to those without as those within the pale of that Episcopate." As a proof of this last point Dr. Shields goes on to show the catholicity, adaptability and unifying power of the Historic Episcopate in words that will be as helpful and suggestive to many Episcopalians themselves as to their non-Episcopal brethren.

But the most valuable part of the whole essay is its conclusion, in which the only three ways in which church unity can be restored, even under the Historic Episcopate: (1) Classification by confederation, (2) Unification by consolidation, and (3) Unification by organic growth, are compared and examined. With remarkable insight into the profound principles of Christian unity, which all beneath the surface hold in common, Dr. Shields places organic growth as a mean between the two extremes of confederation on the one hand and consolidation on the other, which combines what is good in each while it avoids the evil. The

whole subject is bristling with difficulties, and the longer it is pondered, the more insuperable those difficulties appear. No human plan of organization can overcome them. No artificial method will dissolve them, but here in organic growth is an influence which all must recognize as a power from above. It is divine and not human; it is natural and not artificial; it is living and not mechanical; it centralizes itself not in any one Christian body, but in all of them. Though men may not create it, they can develop it by recognizing and yielding themselves up to this force of spiritual gravitation.

The four Chicago-Lambeth articles present an ideal toward which every Christian body can work. If it be a true ideal then it is the duty of each to propagate its influence; if it be false in any respect then it is the duty of each to show exactly where it is false and how it ought to be modified, for to even the intelligent Christian observer the present divided state of Christendom is the crowning evil of the times.

H. Y. SATTERLEE.

**William Hayes Ward, D.D. (Congregational),
Editor of the "Independent," New York.**

I am a great believer in ideals. I am also a great believer in practical politics. The question of the organic union of Christendom is one of lofty idealism; it is also one of practical ecclesiastical politics. The purpose sought, the union or consolidation of the various branches of the Christian Church, recalls the noble ideal which our Lord had in His mind when he left His disciples not without comfort in His departure. The plan to accomplish this ideal presented by Professor Shields has to do simply with the side of practical ecclesiastical politics. It is not a moral or religious question particularly, but a question of condition and method, of compromise and policy.

On the face of it the question of church union is one of compromise. Religious bodies hold different views, use different methods and practise different rites. For the sake of union they ought to be willing to compromise a great deal. The example is that of the first general council at Jerusalem, whose conclusion, we are told, "seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." As it included the writers of pretty much all the New Testament, and as we are definitely told it had the endorsement of the Holy Ghost, it has a higher attestation of inspiration than any other passage in the Bible. It was the result of a full discussion between the two great parties in the early Church, and was a temporary compromise

made for the sake of avoiding a schism into two denominations. Believers were told that they would do well if they would avoid four things: fornication, things offered to idols, things strangled, and blood. Of those prohibitions one stands, because founded in our moral nature. The other three were but temporary, and two of them are never mentioned again in the Bible. St. Paul, who submitted for the time for his brethren's sake, within ten years taught that things offered to idols might be eaten if nobody objected. Here is our great illustration and example of a holy compromise for the sake of unity, one that we ought to be willing to follow just as soon as we can once get together in a Jerusalem conference, and with the Holy Ghost.

But that is still impossible, and will be for a long time to come. In the first place, the Roman Catholic Church distinctly declares that it will consent to no compromise. Nothing short of the acknowledgment of the supreme authority of an infallible Pope will be considered. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest body in the Christian world. Its refusal ends for a long time to come the spangled dream of the reunion of Christendom.

Equally impracticable is any present thought of an organic union of Protestants with Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites, Nestorians, Copts or Abyssinians. Some of them are out of reach, and others would not consent.

These are the hard facts which practical ecclesiastical politics must accept; and having accepted them it is of no use for any one to brood over the subject any further, unless some gracious sunset hours of life can be given to Patmos visions.

That leaves us Protestantism. Can Protestantism agree on a compromise, and what shall it be? It is the practical, not any academical question which concerns us. If any comprehensive attempt were to be made to unite Protestant Christendom in some organic way, this must be either by confederation, or by an organic union that will make one ecclesiastical body out of many and efface their dividing lines.

1. Of these two the former would of course be the easier, as it requires no breaking up of old associations and no general suppression of views or practices. All that would be required is that each denomination should recognize every other denomination as a part of the great Christian Church, entitled to its own doctrinal views and its methods of government, and that they should fully fellowship each other, and meet at stated intervals, once in five or ten years, for acquaintanceship and mutual counsel. That would give a really united Protestantism, as truly united as is the Roman Church, and would do away with the reproach of so many "subdichotomies of schism."

Is it practicable? That is our only question.

No, not as embracing all Protestantism, nor all evangelical Protestantism, even in our own country. Every one knows that the largest family of Protestant denominations in the country, the Baptist family, would not go into such a federation. Baptists, as a whole, do not believe that other denominations are organized on a sufficiently regular basis to allow such a recognition as federation requires. The same is true of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Whatever its Broad Church members might say, yet the attempt to bring that church into a federation which would

allow equal rank and fellowship to Baptists, Presbyterians or Congregationalists with their merely local bishops, would cause a split in the denomination itself. It is simply impracticable with either Baptists or Episcopalians until they shall have mastered the dominant schismaticism in their own bodies.

2. The other conceivable method is that of organic union, the dividing lines between the denominations being obliterated.

This requires that each of the denominations should lay down its *minimum quid*; that agreement should be obtained by reducing all to their least common denominator. Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, etc., must each tell what they will not give up, or what is the same thing, what they will insist upon in the fusion. A beginning in this direction has been made by the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is remarkable that no other church has done the same thing.

It is not a difficult thing to draw up what is the common Protestant creed; but when each denomination had laid down that on which it would insist, it would not be found that this would be the common Protestant creed. We should have precisely the same difficulty as before, only intensified. If Baptists and Episcopalians cannot abide each other or the rest of Protestant Christendom in federal union, much less can they in organic union. The fact is too palpable to be denied.

The proposal of the Episcopalians, embodied in the Chicago-Lambeth Articles, is hardly worth discussing. It offers no compromise, but simply affirms the doctrinal and ecclesiastical position of that church. Its first article affirms the Holy Scripture, on which all Christianity rests. Its

second article affirms the Apostles' Creed, a passably good creed, but one of no authority and little weight, and unhappy in the balance of its statements. It is not worth being required as the basis of agreement. The third article requires a particular way of administering the two sacraments, thus not only excluding the Quakers, but putting an emphasis on rite, and the method of a rite, which Christianity puts only on the spirit. The fourth is even more of the essence of formality and Jewish Pharisaism in that it insists that the kingdom of God rests on bishops, and a certain sort of bishops, called "historical," meaning, as their representative men tell us, diocesan bishops possessing a certain "succession."

To this demand, the chief one that has attracted discussion, I understand that Prof. Shields is ready to yield. I understand that he would have Presbyterianism become Episcopacy and have Presbyterian ministers ordained by Episcopal bishops, and perhaps consecrate bishops of their own. Why does he do this? Simply because our Episcopal brethren declare that they will unite on no other condition. Why should they demand the acceptance of Episcopacy any more than Baptists should demand the rejection of it! There is no reason why. Either demand is arrogance, and arrogance is not the road to Christian union. The large majority of Protestants believe—the overwhelming majority in this country—that the Apostolic Church had no diocesan episcopacy, and they see no reason why people should not have liberty in the matter. To demand that they accept it as the condition of union seems to them like the imposition of circumcision on the Gentile Christians. They are

perfectly willing to allow and recognize it, but not to be enslaved to it. Were the Presbyterians, whom Prof. Shields addresses, to accept ordination by Episcopal bishops, and so become incorporated with Episcopalianism, that would not be a step toward church unity but a step away from it; for it would make the schism greater between them and Baptists, Congregationalists and even Methodists.

The Episcopalians have offered their ultimatum, and the reception it has received proves that there is no hope in it as a basis of union. Now let Baptists offer theirs, Presbyterians theirs, Methodists theirs, Lutherans theirs, and let us see whether Episcopalians will be any more ready to accept these than other bodies have been to accept theirs. As a Congregationalist I can imagine, after full deliberation, our National Council offering some such tentative basis as this:

1. The acceptance of Jesus Christ as the revealer of God and the divine Teacher and Saviour of the world.

2. The Bible as the record of God's progressive revelation of Himself and of His Son to the world.

3. Love of God and love of man as the central teaching of the Bible and of Christ, and the test of the possession of the Spirit of God.

4. Liberty in the search after truth, in the use of ordinances and the methods of church administration.

Is there any present hope of such a *minimum quid* as this being accepted by the Episcopalians? Not a bit, and hardly by Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians. Yet it is a hundredfold more hope-

ful as a basis of union than the Episcopalian quadrilateral. But were it accepted it would not mean consolidation, but federation—and that is, I think, the only hope of general church union within even telescopic vision.

But there is every hope of success in the minor church unions which seek to consolidate the denominations which are embraced in a denominational family, as all the sections of Presbyterianism, or of the Baptists, or the Methodists. Here is field enough for the labors of a sanctified ecclesiastical statesmanship. The rest must wait.

WILLIAM HAYES WARD.

**Rev. Wm. Sorbes Cooley (Congregational),
Stanly, N. J.**

Confessedly Doctor Shields treats of a castle in the air, a structure whose gates, walls and towers are the bars of light shot through the early twilight by a coming greater day. Therefore it is not only well in the future and as yet quite intangible, but to many absolutely invisible. Yet Saint John saw it long ago and in its perfected form, and saw it in the same quarter coming down to earth "out of heaven." Doctor Shields' vision and report of it are most cheering to all those who look and long for that coming day of the new Catholic Church, the day when real campaigning shall take the place of the present guerilla warfare.

His essay is another sign, a signal proof that Christian life is asserting itself against ecclesiasticism, and beginning to insist that in the necessary alliance between the two, it, by God-given right, is master and not servant; and Christian life it is, springing from and guided by the Holy Ghost, and not any theory working by artificial means, that is to bring the Church to unity, and realize the desire and prayer of the Christ. So long as that life is regarded as an energy, subject and confined to a mechanism, like steam or electricity, a divinely contrived mechanism completed for all time in the apostolic age, so long Christian unity and the victories of combined Christian forces are impossible—at any rate until the Creator ceases to cut human material on such diverse patterns. Each sect knows too well that that heavenly

mechanism is its own sole and exclusive property. When, however, we come to realize that the Church is an *organism*, a living body as Paul thought of it, of which divinely controlled Christian life is not only the moving power, as in a machine, but actually the *creator*, we have scarcely more than an antiquarian interest as to whether our sect or some other preserves the primitive type. A more important inquiry takes precedence, the inquiry as to what were the forms which in the times past most like our own the divine Spirit led the Church to assume, and what, judging from Providential guidance heretofore, are the types He seems to be indicating for the Church of to-day?

In times of beginnings or of ecclesiastical despotism, times of simple problems and intensity of feeling, the divine presence has been manifest repeatedly and signally in churches of the Congregational type. In times when liberty was running into license, especially in those practical elements of belief which govern conduct; when Christianity was in danger of disintegrating, the Presbyterian order of representative government has, from the council of Jerusalem down, proved an eminently conservative agency, and has demonstrated by its works the presence of the divine Spirit. Distinctively, however, ours is an age neither of ecclesiastical despotism nor of religious disintegration, certain partisans of radicalism on the one hand and mediævalism on the other to the contrary notwithstanding. Yet since liberty and truth do still need to be conserved, it is not to be doubted that congregational control of congregational matters and the fundamentals of the Presbyterian polity are to be features of the Church of the future.

Thus far we of the Puritan and the Reformed churches are substantially agreed. We are at one, also, probably, in esteeming this a preeminently practical age, an age of colossal human problems. Why, then, in the face of the historic examples of the Church of the Ante-Nicene period, the Mediæval Church and the more recent phenomenal advance of the Methodist Episcopal Church, should we shut our eyes to the fact that in periods of outward exigency, when great work is to be done and great secular foes are to be fought, rather than problems of faith to be solved or liberty to be won, the Episcopate, be its origin what it may, has by its victories and its services to the Church vindicated its claim to divine sanction? We shall not be unorthodox (Luke 16:8), if we open our eyes. "The children of this world" have discovered the principle involved. A theological seminary may be left to shift without a president; but in affairs neither business nor political administration nor war is intrusted to a multiple executive.

WM. FORBES COOLEY.

George R. Crooks, D.D. (Methodist), Professor in Drew Theological Seminary.

I am compelled to disappoint you in relation to the article on Dr. Shields' book. I have not had time to read it with care, and do not wish to write on that topic hastily. I have already discussed a kindred topic with him in *The Century*, and have given my judgment of the proposed reunion in *The Church Review*. The feeling which is uppermost in my mind when I think of the proposal, is that the Historic Episcopate is Apostolic Succession disguised. The disguise imposes on the unsuspecting, and is used as a means of making what would be otherwise offensive, acceptable. Are we to admit that our churches have all along been no churches? our sacraments been no sacraments? our ministers only laymen? Yet this is all implied in the acceptance of the offer of the Protestant Episcopal bishops. And, moreover, must we accept the dogma of baptismal regeneration?—for the Historic Episcopate is the depository of grace, and grace flows to believers through their ordination.

GEORGE R. CROOKS.

George A. Gates, D.D., (Congregationalist,)
 President Iowa College, Grinnell, Iowa.

There are two questions concerning church unity: Is it a good thing as an end in itself? What do we want church unity for?

To the first we might all say, yes. But after all it would not be a very important matter. If the Church is an end in itself, we can get on quite comfortably as we are. Whether we have one denomination or a thousand is of little consequence, so long as each one is contented in its own work, and satisfied to build itself up in its own way. The analogy of the family is pertinent. Each man is supposed to be contented in his own family, irrelatively to other families. Or it may please all families to unite in a community. Whichever they like may be, all may be well. But it ought to be impossible to consider church unity as an end. That is a matter interesting enough for us as ecclesiastics to work or play with, but no divine necessity seems to be about it.

If, on the other hand, we consider what the Church is in the world for anyhow, the question of church unity of some sort becomes of importance in a measure out of comparison with its significance before. The Church is in the world on an apostolic mission. By its efficiency in accomplishing the end whereto it was sent will it be judged. Its mission is its only *raison d'être*. In the sixty-five pages of Dr. Shields' essay there is not a syllable, unless it has been accidentally overlooked, which touches this second question.

So far as would appear from the pages of the essay, the question has never appeared above the horizon of the writer. That, however, would be a hasty conclusion, and it is really inconceivable that one who can write with such perspicuous lucidity on the minor topic has failed to measure that topic's importance by its relation to the larger one. It is probably a piece of consummate art that one question only was discussed, and that, with the topic before the writer, was necessarily the smaller one.

Judged in that way, there are only words of praise for it. Such an essay could be produced by nothing short of wide and deep scholarship, a generous and sympathetic view of other men than himself and other institutions than his own, by a spirit most catholic and fair, by a devotion to a scholarly and exact interpretation of history, which makes his treatment of a topic that fairly bristles with prejudices at every step, almost faultlessly fair and true.

If, as the writer says, the Historic Episcopate "neither enjoins nor forbids the doctrine of apostolical succession, presented as an historic institution apart from any theory of its origin and claims, it allows all such theories, without repressing any of them," then it would seem that any fair-minded Christian who recognizes the desirability of church unity under any method, could accept it. An episcopate of that nature need be in no respect more anti-democratic than the crown of England is at present. It would probably be admitted by those most competent to judge that the English monarch is, as now constituted and estimated, an aid to democracy.

We all know when we are perfectly frank that

some sort of episcopacy is universal in all the affairs of men. Men naturally want and naturally follow leadership. Sometimes the leaders are self-appointed, and then there is apt to be difficulty, and ought to be. But if the leaders can be fairly representative, whether by election or some method of succession wide enough and plastic enough to insure real representation, there would seem to be no reason why ultra ecclesiastical democrats like Congregationalists could not accept all that Dr. Shields says; much more ought, as he clearly points out, Presbyterians to do so; much more still those who already have an episcopate in some form, like the Methodists. It probably is not the fact of the Historic Episcopate so much as it is the superadded notion of exclusive privilege which creates the difficulty. The church world will not rebel against election or succession to sacrificial service. It will and ought to rebel against exclusiveness and privilege, and the assumption of rights and power based on these. Dr. Shields makes a valuable contribution to the current discussion of this crucial point in church unity, namely, the Historic Episcopate, when he in a sentence or two frees it from these extraneous and unessential elements. In short, most any of us could go with Phillips Brooks' idea of the Historic Episcopate.

Such church unity as Dr. Shields describes with prophetic clearness of vision does not need to involve overlooking the mission of the great denominations of Protestantism and their positive contributions to human life. Many of these achievements are of permanent value. They were lifts over places which the progress of the Church and race had sometime to pass.

There is work in the years just before us for the Church to do so great that church unity is likely to seem almost a trivial step to take. The world is to be won to Christ, and pressure outside the Church will more than likely force some measure of church unity at any cost. It is a fair question whether without that pressure from the outside the divisions of Christendom can be brought to their higher senses; can be made to see that the things concerning which contention has so long been made must disappear from the field of thought and action, in order that the Church may fling itself, with the divine self-renunciation of its Lord and Master, into the great world of human sin and need, unto the world's redemption.

GEORGE A. GATES.

Theodore S. Seward, President Brotherhood of Christian Unity.

For three years I have sought ways and means of promoting unity among the followers of Christ. From this practical side I am led to the same conclusion that Dr. Shields has reached by his study of ecclesiastical history. As he says, Christian unity and organic Church unity are two separate ideas. Christian unity is helped by everything that tends to exalt Christ above dogma in the minds of the people. It is this element in the Brotherhood of Christian Unity which causes it to be received with so much favor. But when the question of an actual union of Christian denominations is considered, and a system is sought which will, in the course of time, change a divided Christendom into a united Christendom, it appears to me that Dr. Shields' position is impregnable. It is a most striking providence, that a Christian teacher, whose ecclesiastical affiliations are all on "the other side," has been led to place the issue so clearly before us.

THEODORE F. SEWARD.

**David Waters, D.D. (Reformed Dutch),
Newark, N. J.**

In the year 1886 the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States formulated four articles as a basis upon which the Protestant Churches, or for the matter of that, all the churches of Christendom, might be united. These articles were approved by the Lambeth conference of 1888, and sent forth with the cordial endorsement of that august body. The subject of the reunion of Christendom has been fully treated by Professor Shields, of Princeton, in a paper which is now published under the title of "The Historic Episcopate: An Essay on the Four Articles of Church Unity Proposed by the American House of Bishops and the Lambeth Conference."

In the consideration of a matter of such vast importance certain questions naturally occur to thoughtful minds.

First. Is such a union desirable ?

Second. Is the proposed basis of union adequate ?

Third. Is union on this basis practicable ?

As to the first of these questions, there can be very little difference of opinion. It is taken for granted that all Christian people are agreed that if such a union can be brought about without the sacrifice of principle or of any fundamental doctrine, it would undoubtedly be of incalculable benefit to the cause of Christianity. The aggressive power of the Church would be greatly increased, there

would be a wiser and more economical use of men and means in carrying on that work, and, above all, the unity of the Church would be visibly manifested in such a way that the world would have no difficulty in understanding its reality. There is, however, one thing to be kept in mind, which is apparently not seldom forgotten in such a discussion as this—that there is a real, substantial unity between all the members of the household of faith. They are all one in Christ. He is the head and they are the members of His spiritual body, although differing in name, function and office. This, I think, is sometimes lost sight of, and outward uniformity and conformity to an established form of ritual and polity mistaken for that genuine unity which makes all true believers in Christ. It was in attempting to enforce this outward uniformity that the government of the day persecuted the Covenanters of Scotland to the death and inflicted grievous suffering upon the Nonconformists of England.

Regarding the second of these questions, as to the adequacy of the proposed basis as finally formulated by the Lambeth Conference of 1888, and which is strenuously supported by Professor Shields, the simplest method will be an examination of each article in the proposed basis. They are as follows :

1. "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith." This article will undoubtedly be accepted as the foundation upon which a united Church must be built.

2. "The Apostles' Creed as the baptismal symbol and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith."

In the confessions of the churches of the Reformation and the bodies which have sprung from them, there is a very much fuller statement of doctrine than that which is to be found in these creeds. Excellent as they are, and satisfactory so far as they go, there are probably some who will have no hesitation in saying that they do not go far enough. For example, the recent reply of the English Presbyterian Synod to the Archbishop's letter spoke of hesitation in accepting the Nicene Creed as "the sufficient statement of the Christian faith," and then goes on to say: "Had it been proposed to negotiate with the doctrinal articles of the Thirty-nine as a basis we (like our forefathers in earlier times) would have recognized in them a body of doctrine common to us with our Anglican brethren, on the basis of which we might approach each other with good hope of agreement."

Notwithstanding such objections, let us take it for granted that the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed form a sufficiently broad foundation for the united church to stand upon—provided that the various denominations who enter into that union shall be still permitted to hold their own doctrinal standards, in so far as they are not inconsistent with the doctrinal symbols of the united church. In that case, other things being satisfactory, union may be both possible and practicable.

3. The two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

There can be very little doubt as to the general acceptance of this article; it being understood that the mode of administering baptism, whether by immersion, affusion or sprinkling shall be left

to the judgment of the various churches entering into the projected union. Whether the Society of Friends can be brought to agree to this article may be questioned.

4. The last of these articles reads as follows: The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His church.

This, we apprehend, is the chief point where difficulty is certain to arise. The assumption underlying the claims put forth on behalf of the Historic Episcopate is this—that the Historic Episcopate is the divinely appointed method of church government and administration, and that those churches which can trace their existence back to the time of the Apostles by means of the Episcopate, and those only, have a right to the title of Church; and, further, that all valid orders must come through the Episcopate. Now in the encyclical letter of the Lambeth Conference, all other sections of the Church are spoken of not as churches but simply as bodies, *e. g.*, “We gladly and thankfully recognize the real religious work which is carried on by Christian bodies not of our communion.” On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that the various churches of the Reformation holding the Presbyterian system held that the divinely appointed order was that of the Presbyterate, that the term presbyter and bishop were interchangeable, that the presbyter was a bishop and the bishop a presbyter. It was held that there was absolutely no countenance given in the New Testament to the idea of the modern episcopate, and that as a matter of historical fact, the Episcopate does not appear until about the middle

of the Second Century. Professor Ramsay, in his work on "The Church in the Roman Empire," in tracing the organization of the Church, says that it may be described thus: 1. "Each individual community was ruled by a gradation of officials, at whose head was the bishop, and the bishop represented the community." This was the state of things in the year A. D. 170. The Presbyterian would naturally say that this represents the parish with the pastor at the head of the church as the overseer or bishop. As I am not arguing the question of the divine right of episcopacy or presbytery, or any other form of church government, I simply refer to these statements so that we may see what the actual state of the case is in this discussion.

We now come to the third question, viz., Is union on this basis practicable?

In reply, I think this must be said, that as long as the Episcopal Church holds that the Episcopal is the only divinely authorized form of church government and episcopal ordination, the only regular ordination for the Christian ministry union on the basis proposed by the Lambeth Conference is impracticable. It is both impracticable and impossible, unless the ministry and members of other churches are willing to become Episcopalian, both in theory and practice. As a case in point, it may be mentioned that the answers sent by the Baptist Union, the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, and the Presbyterian Synod of England in reply to the letter of the Archbishop, in which he had forwarded the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference to these bodies, all treat the clause concerning the

Historic Episcopate as barring the way to union. They are all agreed in understanding the Historic Episcopate to mean the Diocesan Episcopate, and they are also agreed in affirming that this is not primitive and apostolic.

Summing up the whole matter and setting aside any objections which may be made to the adequacy of the doctrinal basis as something which might be overcome, it is to my mind perfectly clear that no general union of the churches can be formed on the basis of the proposal of the Lambeth Conference with the statement regarding the Historic Episcopate as one of the fundamental articles of the basis of union.

Good will, no doubt, come out of the discussion, and churches of like faith and order will probably see their way to come together in closer bonds, as the various branches of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Canada have already done, and as the churches forming "The Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian system" are doing in some measure in their quadrennial councils.

DAVID WATERS.

**Rev. Gilbert Reid (Presbyterian), Missionary
to China.**

The paper prepared by Dr. Shields is the result of many years of investigation, and being by one who is a Presbyterian on a system that is Episcopal, the ideas presented are worthy of attention for the breadth of view, comprehensiveness of scope and liberality of aspiration which they exhibit. The argument is not that of a novice.

Dr. Shields sets himself to the defense, not of a unity of spirit, which all Christians already believe in and recognize, but of real organic union. This is other than confederation, which at best is only a half-way measure and cannot be the ultimate expression. If Christ established a kingdom or organized a church, it surely consisted in something more than mere spirit. "Ye are the body of Christ" indicates an organism, which of course must have the Christ-spirit. Why should believers be so afraid of showing forth in real strength, solidity and unity of organization the one body of Christ, with different members indeed, but one body, and being one body certainly other than one spirit? We rejoice that a Presbyterian takes his stand along with the Episcopal communion in emphasizing anew the old Presbyterian doctrine, which is also the doctrine of the ancient Church, that there is a church visible and a church catholic.

Dr. Shields also appreciates, as very few non-Episcopalians seem capable of appreciating, the generosity of the offer of the Lambeth Confer-

ence. Because the historic Episcopate is made one of the points of the basis, this does not mean that the Episcopal Church of America or the Church of England, with all their canons, rites, ritual and personal preferences, is made the basis. It is a fair offer of church union, not of swallowing up or being swallowed. Neither is anything said against the Presbyterian or Independent principles. If those principles conflict, they do so with the principle of organic union rather than the Episcopal principle. Being a clear offer of union, all these principles are to be recognized. If the Presbyterian insists on leaving out the Episcopal principle, he is the one who is trying to do some swallowing. Hence we say "Hear! hear!" to the words of Dr. Shields on this point.

Dr. Shields likewise keeps in view the desirability of ultimate union with the other branches of the Christian church as found in the Roman and Greek branches. They may finally unite, if the Episcopal principle is maintained, but not otherwise. Let us in our efforts for church union seek the union of all believers and all branches of the Church.

Not till we come to the question with a fair amount of generosity, and in all sincerity promptly recognize the longings of others, whatever the denomination, for the complete fulfillment of Christ's prayer that we all may be one, can we expect these propositions of the highest representatives of the Episcopal faith will be taken just as they were intended—as an honest and generous offer for reaching the glorious end. Let us try each one to see eye to eye on this vital matter, and so hasten the subjugation of the world to the Kingdom of Christ.

REV. GILBERT REID,
American Presbyterian Mission, China.

Lyman Abbott, D.D. (Congregational), Brooklyn, N. Y.

You ask me for my views respecting Church unity. They must be very briefly, and therefore somewhat dogmatically put.

Church unity can never be based upon one form of government, as an Episcopate, a Presbyteriate, or Independency. Forms of government are necessarily temporary and evanescent. The unity of the Church of Christ must be eternal and include the Church above, as well as the Church on earth. It cannot be based upon a creed that is to make the Church a school, and its unity depend upon agreement in certain intellectual propositions to be taught. But the Church is more than a school, and the truth cannot be comprised in any intellectual propositions however venerable.

The unity of the Church of Christ must be a unity of spirit; it must be a unity in Jesus Christ, that is, a unity of loyalty to Him as a supreme Lord and Master; and this is not to be confounded with loyalty to certain opinions concerning Him which have been held by the Church and are formulated in its creeds; nor with loyalty to a hierarchy which stands in His place and is His representative. The unity of the Church of Christ must be based upon faith that Jesus Christ is now upon the earth as truly as He ever was, and that His Church is composed of those who are personally loyal to Him as a risen, living and present leader.

This unity, therefore, must be a growth; it

cannot be manufactured. And the order of its growth is indicated by Saint Paul in the verse, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

There must first be one Lord. If some in the Church are worshiping a God of wrath, and others a God of justice, and others a God of mercy, and still others a God who is love, there can be no unity. They must all come to see that there is no wrath or justice or mercy which is not an inflection of love. They must worship the same Lord, not merely call Him by the same name.

Out of this worship there must grow one faith. And faith in the New Testament never means a dogma or creed, but always a spiritual experience. There must be a communion of spiritual experience before there can be a unity in Church organization. Hymn books and devotional books unite us; creeds and theologies divide us; because faith is unifying, while the intellect is analytic and so divisive.

When we have all come to worship one Lord, and have come to sing together and pray together in one common experience of faith and hope and love, then, and not till then, can we hope for one baptism, that is, one outward and visible symbol of the inward and spiritual unity.

I do not, therefore, hope much from debates about Church union and conventions to promote it; but I hope very much from such movements as the Young Men's Christian Association, the King's Daughters, the Societies of Christian Endeavor, and from frequent meeting together in Christian and philanthropic gatherings. Out of these will grow gradually that unity of faith which is the indispensable pre-requisite to Church co-operation, and out of Church co-operation Church federation, and out of Church federation Church unity.

Yours sincerely, LYMAN ABBOTT.

George Dana Boardman, D D. (Baptist),
Philadelphia.

The editor of THE REVIEW OF THE CHURCHES has honored me with the request to answer the following questions: "(1) Is the Reunion of Christendom desirable? (2) Is it feasible? (3) How may it best be promoted?" I will try to answer these questions in the briefest way possible.

I. "Is the Unification of Christendom desirable?"

It will be observed that I have ventured to substitute the word "unification" for the word "reunion." For I am not aware that Christendom has ever been united in such a way as to make a reunion desirable. The sad fact seems to be that the Church of the primitive period, instead of having been, as we so often fondly imagine, a concord of brothers, was largely a discord of wranglers; so that St. Paul felt himself constrained to rectify the doctrinal heresies of Rome; to pacify the warring sectarians of Corinth; to reclaim the theological apostates of Galatia; to guard against a Gentile life in Ephesus; to exhort Euodia and Syntyche to be of the same in the Lord in Philippi; to warn against the dangerous tendencies in Colosse; to rebuke the disorderly walkers in Thessalonica; to caution Timothy and Titus against the heresiarchs who were already subverting the churches, etc. If the "Christendom" of Christ's day was already a union, why did Christ pray that His followers might become one,

“perfected into unity?” The truth is, the primitive Church, like every other thing of life, began in infantile imperfection, but subject to the blessed law of growth and perfection. Ideals, always excepting the one perfect Man, are ever before us, never behind us. “That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.” The question, then, is not —“Is the reunion of Christendom desirable?”

But the question is—“Is the unification of Christendom desirable?” To this I answer, unhesitatingly, Yes. And this for many reasons. For example: (1) It is desirable æsthetically. It does not seem decorous for a church of love to be a church of war. (2) It is desirable practically. Nothing so impedes progress as self-contradiction. A house divided against itself cannot stand. (3) It is desirable morally. If there is anything characteristically Christian, it is Christ’s doctrine of love. If there is anything characteristically antichristian, it is Antichrist’s doctrine of hate. The *spirit* of sectarianism is the spirit of Diabolus in saintly guise.

II. “Is the Unification of Christendom feasible?”

To this I answer as unhesitatingly, Yes. Our Lord is no tyrant. Whatever He commands is not only imperative—it is also practicable. Do you think that when He prayed to His Father that His people might be unified, He prayed in vain?

III. “How may the Unification of Christendom be best promoted?”

I answer, by subordinating incidentals of form (such as formulas, politics, etc.), to essentials of life (such as faith, love, etc.). “Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the

raiment?" Nearly nineteen centuries have rolled away since our Lord taught this. Yet we, not less than His contemporaries, still need His reference to ancient Hosea: "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." Ritual is good (especially "baptism by immersion"), but charity is better. What though the great majority of modern Christians have not, as I venture to think, been baptized with the immersion of Jesus? Let me pray for them, as the good Hezekiah prayed for the many of Asher and Ephraim and Manasseh and Issachar and Zebulun, who had eaten the passover otherwise than it is written, saying with him, "The good Jehovah pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek the God of his fathers, Jehovah, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary!" When I come to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, He will not ask me, "Were you baptized?" But He will ask me, "Did you try to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself?"

Not but that denominationalism does have its place. But that place is no longer in the foreground; that place is henceforth in the background. For the Kingdom of God is larger than any church or all the churches of man. Not but that individualism still has its function. But that function is not to maintain itself in isolation and independency; that function is to maintain itself as a constituent and co-operating part of a larger corporate whole. For individualism is essential to wholeism. But the whole is larger than any of its parts. Unity is greater than units. Instead, then, of Christendom continuing to disintegrate itself into churches, Christendom ought to begin to integrate itself

into the Church. Sectarianism, as its very etymology confesses, is sectional, that is, fragmental. Denominationalism, by and in the very fact of priding itself on being a denomination, proclaims itself to be but a segment, not the circle or sphere. Denominations—at least some of them—do have a divine mission. But no denomination, however large or rich or wise, will be true to its divine mission until it regards itself as but a co-operative member of the one body of Christ, and tributary to that body as one corporate whole. To illustrate: The efficiency or practical worth of my thumb does not consist in the fact of its being a thumb, but it consists in the fact of its being an organic part of my hand, even as my hand is an organic part of my arm, and my arm an organic part of my body. Let my thumb undertake to work independently of my body, and it becomes as useless as though it had been amputated. Now denominationalism says: “Behold, I am the thumb; see how shapely I am, how clean I keep myself, how neatly I pare my nail! Fingers, leave my hand; Hand, leave my arm; Arm, leave my body; come over all of you, and join yourselves to myself!” Whereas the only true worth and glory any noblest denomination has consists, not in its being a separate denomination, but in its being a denominational member of the one body of Christ, and functionally serviceable to the whole organism.

The best way, then, of promoting the Unification of Christendom is for all the denominations to say to each other (and act on the principle): “You and we are the one body of Christ, and therefore members one of another; let us then grow up together in all things into Him who is our head—even Christ.”

GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN.

**Joseph J. Synnott, D.D. (Roman Catholic),
Seton Hall College.**

Having but a very brief period in which to prepare this notice, I cannot do more than set down hurriedly some of the thoughts that entered my mind as I read Dr. Shields' essay on the Historic Episcopate. What feelings of pity are awakened by such a work in a Catholic heart! It seems to be the despairing cry of heart-broken Protestantism for what it lost by its separation from the center of truth and unity. Protestantism, viewing its hopeless divisions and dissensions, and sitting like the Prophet amid the ruins of its temple, makes its lament, and proposes, with much faltering and hesitation, plans—vague and misty—for reorganization and reunion. It turns its gaze back to the fair city from which it went out, and sees there the desired elements of union and strength, and fain would adopt some of them in the hope of preserving and renewing itself.

To me—for I speak only in my own name—it is an honest source of pleasure to see among the Protestant denominations an effort of any kind at union. The disorganization and disintegration of Protestantism cannot be viewed without serious misgivings. In the spectacle there is naturally a certain gratification for the Catholic; for this decay is to him proof sufficient of the inherent mistake of the Reformation in rejecting the bond of union in the central teaching and governing authority of the Church. Yet his leading sentiment is that of fear; those who desert the old

standards of Protestantism in this country do not as a rule knock at the door of the Catholic Church; they drift naturally into indifference and agnosticism. Is this not a direct tendency to religious anarchy? As in the political world social anarchy will be the foe of the future, so in the religious world religious anarchy will be the dread antagonist that will make the last, long, desperate struggle against the Church of Christ.

Will the four articles of the Chicago-Lambeth Conferences be able to unite Protestantism in organic unity? The restoration of the Episcopate is looked upon as the most important step towards corporate union. Two questions present themselves to the mind at the outset: 1st. Will all Protestant denominations accept bishops as their rulers? 2d. Will the Episcopate, if restored according to the new proposals, result in any real, organic unity? The first question I am not called upon to answer. With regard to the second, I must say that I do not understand how the restoration of bishops will make of Protestantism a united, organic institution. If the advocates of the Historic Episcopate should succeed in having bishops appointed in all the Protestant denominations, this will not constitute organic unity. It will constitute at most an external resemblance, an outward form which will be common to all Protestant denominations. There may be similarity of organization; but similarity of organization does not constitute organic unity. Tie all the trees, plants, shrubs and flowers of your garden to stakes of the same size and kind, will you thereby make them one plant, one tree, one growth? Some of them will look very uncomfortable and unnatural in their stiff bonds; but they have not by this process become branches of the one vine.

Neither will the acceptance of the other articles of the Lambeth-Chicago proposals add the lacking elements. By these articles three other points of similarity are added to the common form of government by bishops; but you are still far from having brought about church unity. Let me use another illustration. Let us suppose that you could persuade all the nations of the earth to accept several fundamental principles of civil polity as the basis of their constitutions; would you have made them thereby one united nation? And if you were able to persuade all to adopt a like form of government—even that which we all cherish as the latest and best—would you have abolished all national distinctions and have attained at last the “federation of man?” No; you would still have as many nations as before. You would, indeed, have similar nations; you would have nations united in certain leading principles of government; but you would not have one nation as the result.

The Historic Episcopate and the three other articles will give at most similarity in four points. But I fear that the plan would not long maintain even this similarity. The four articles might be held everywhere, but everywhere they could be held differently. One bishop might interpret them in one sense, another in another sense; some would hold them in a Catholic, but not Roman sense; others in a Presbyterian, but not Methodist sense. A glance at the first of the four articles, which makes the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament the rule and ultimate standard of faith, will serve to illustrate my meaning. Under the wide folds of this article all differences might rest in peace. The same

bishops would be asked to govern in perfect friendliness and harmony those who denied the inspiration of the Scriptures and those who hold that even the punctuation marks are inspired. For, be it well noted, under the Historic Episcopate as restored to Christendom, all insignificant questions on the inspiration of the Scriptures, on the nature of inspiration, on the number of the inspired books, would be pushed gently aside and would not be permitted to disturb the tranquility of the brethren. The modern Bible critic who denies the authenticity of the Book of Isaias, and holds that Genesis is but a patchwork of myths and fables, and that the Gospels were not written until the second or the third century, will be invited to shake hands with the dingy student of the old school who firmly believes that the editors of the revised version were inspired by the Evil One. The lion and the lamb, indeed, will lie down together under the shadow of the Historic Episcopate.

Regarding the other articles endless disagreements must arise. Can the "two sacraments" be considered indifferently under the new Historic Episcopate, either as mere signs and symbols, or as necessary channels of grace and sanctification? Would the doctrine of transubstantiation be as acceptable to the Historic Episcopate as the doctrine of impanation? Will all the theories of the Atonement, of grace and justification find a quiet camping ground within the new lines? What unity would there be here? Will that be one religion, one church, which looks with impartial gaze on those who hold the most essential differences in faith? The Church is the collection of those who believe; there can be no unity of

church where there is no unity of faith. Holding the four articles, and holding them everywhere differently, will never make church unity.

There will hardly be, under the Historic Episcopate, when we take a practical view of the case, a sufficient external liturgical agreement to make the denominations that accept it really one in the eyes of the world. The devout adherents of the new order will see in one of their new churches a vested ritualist, and in another the progressive and thoroughly American presbyter who conducts services in a frock coat and nicely creased trousers. A religion with unity of that kind will hardly appeal to the common mind; and after all it must stand the test of the common mind. It must not be satisfied with a transcendental and invisible unity. It must be for mankind, and mankind at large must see its unity.

The new movement demands, and rightly, social, organic unity. In a social organization, to make it one, there must be a central, universal authority. Until the colonies established the central government at Washington, they were not one country. Without the central, supreme power of government, there can be no real unity. Where is this power in the Historic Episcopate?

The Catholic idea of unity is unity with a uniting principle. It is unity of doctrine and teaching; unity in government; unity in a central authority, directing, controlling, guiding and leading all its subjects by concerted action to the attainment of one end. This is organic unity, the unity of the branches and the vine. This is social unity. This is church unity. This is historic unity. Christ did not leave the world until the end of the nineteenth century in ignorance of

the fact that unity is essential. No; He made his Church *one* from the beginning; and as He instituted His Church, so He preserved her. There is, and was, and ever will be, but one fold and one Shepherd.

The present movement, defective as it is in its fundamental conception, may, we hope, be turned to good. It recognizes the need of union; it admits the absolute necessity of organization in church matters; nay, it concedes the institution of the Church as a visible, social, organic body; it looks upon the Episcopate as the only means of achieving unity. It is on the right road: Let it go a step further, and it will see in the Church of Rome not only the Historic Episcopate, but also the Historic Primacy, the formal element and bond of union and strength. Let it turn from its efforts to breathe the breath of life into the dead body of Protestantism, and examine that vast and beauteous organization where harmony is law and union is assured, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, whose head still reigns in Rome, the center of Unity, in blessed Peter's stead.

I was asked to give my "frankest thought in the most outspoken manner." I sincerely hope that in accepting this invitation I have done naught to hinder the "reunion of Christendom" under the banner of Christ, which is the banner of truth, ever one and indefectible.

JOSEPH. J. SYNNOTT.

RESPONSE TO THE MANY VOICES.

Prof. Charles W. Shields, D.D.

The many voices which have been evoked on behalf of church unity are pleasant to hear. At times their latent discords seem to blend in a higher harmony. All the contributors to the symposium are agreed in lamenting our unhappy divisions, in recognizing unity as normal in the body of Christ, and in looking and longing for its fulfillment. It is only when the question of method is raised that the disagreement begins.

I would need more space than could reasonably be allowed to this response, if I should fitly acknowledge the many kind things which have been said of my essay on "The Historic Episcopate," especially the too kind words of the editor of this Review, in more than one instance. I must be content with a general acknowledgment once for all, and proceed, if I may without presumption, to estimate the valuable opinions brought together, in their bearing upon the problem of Church Unity. This will be no easy task, since the variety of these opinions is confusing and the aim of their authors is not always apparent. They will naturally group themselves for our purpose, according to the three church polities which they severally represent, as Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal.

CONGREGATIONAL OPINIONS.

At the head of the Congregational group is the admirable introduction of Dr. Bradford. The

way to the question is here opened by emphasizing the need for church unity as seen in the unchristian rivalries of the denominations, in the piteous appeals for missionary and humanitarian effort, and in the comparatively trivial differences which separate our churches. When looking for the remedy, Dr. Bradford has the sagacity, candor and charity to see that the Lambeth proposals are not to be put aside as measures of mere church aggrandizement or denominational propagandism, but may be considered, especially the fourth article, as affording a practical if not acceptable basis of unification. His objection that they might produce a mere formal unity without the fullness of spiritual concord, though true in itself, is an objection which must ever inhere in all our schemes of church unity and is not peculiar to the scheme now under consideration. Such concord did not exist even in the golden age of the undivided Apostolic Church.

The new verbal distinction, which Dr. Bradford sanctions, between the Kingdom and the Church of Christ, if it means more than the old distinction between the invisible and visible Church, does not seem to me quite scriptural and may prove misleading when pushed to its issues. Instead of forcing a breach between the teachings of our Saviour and those of his Apostles on this subject I would rather combine them as consistent, complementary and inseparable. The divine ideal of the Church is depicted in more sacred terms than the Kingdom. In fact, the Kingdom of Christ would have been a mere abstraction without His Church, and His Church was simply His organized Kingdom; organized in part by Himself and then more fully by the Apostles

under His teaching and guidance. That first organization, whether it be viewed as authoritative or simply as exemplary, has confessedly become more or less imperfect, corrupt and perverted. It involved Congregational, Presbyterial, and Episcopal elements which now exist as dismembered and conflicting denominations; and the practical question before us is whether they may not be organically re-combined by means of the Historic Episcopate.

Dr. Beach, with his fervent enthusiasm and spiritual insight, discerns these three elemental politics as germs of unity, existing potentially in our Protestant Christianity; emphasizes the futility of mere sentimental schemes of unity, and voices prophetically the deep-seated yearning of the age amid all its discords for catholicity as well as truth and freedom. It is encouraging to hear so stirring a call to unity out of the heart of New England culture.

While I might not fully agree with Mr. Cooley in looking forward to a united church as in prophetic vision or in looking backward to it with a mere antiquarian interest, yet I can cordially concur in his thoughtful and practical view, that of the three factors of organized Christianity, Episcopacy rather than Presbytery or Congregationalism is the chief need of the Church of to-day. But the lesson of history, as I read it, is against the obliteration or inversion of any one of these ecclesiastical elements, and a true Puritanism may consist with all of them when they are freed from mere false ecclesiasticism.

Dr. Stimson puts himself genially in sympathy with the growing spirit of church unity. Perhaps he overlooks the fact that the three "prophets of

the movement " may not be so much opposed as complementary to one another in the methods of unification which they respectively advocated—the "confederation" of Prof. Briggs and the "consolidation" of Dr. Huntington being simply different stages in the same social process of organic reunion and growth. His admission that the Lambeth articles are clarifying the views of some exclusive bodies of Christians is as just as it is frank; but it is to be hoped that he will not be content to remain as a mere sympathetic spectator of the discussions going on in such bodies, but find in Congregational bodies also the need and motive for church unity.

In the present movement the laity are in advance of the clergy, partly because they do not share the clerical sensitiveness as to the vexed question of orders and also because they are in more practical contact with the evils of sectarianism. For this reason the brief letter of Mr. Seward is most significant and hopeful as coming from an acknowledged leader of the Christian people who already foresees in church unity the fulfillment of his own zealous labors for the brotherhood of Christian unity.

Amid these cheering voices President Gates raises the startling query, Is church unity a good thing in itself? A good thing! Is it a good thing that the body of Christ should appear dismembered? Is it a good thing that the household of faith should be divided against itself? Is it a good thing that the invisible community of saints should make itself visible only in sects and schisms, with rivalries and conflicts? Would the healing of such schisms and the removal of such conflicts be a mere "trivial step,"

an "unimportant matter," a "thing for ecclesiastics to play with?" Is there "no divine necessity" of manifesting to the world that oneness of believers in Christ which He likened to this oneness with the Father, and for which He prayed as affording demonstrative proof of His whole earthly mission? Church unity is set before us in the Scriptures not merely as a good end in itself, but as one of the highest ends of Christian hope and effort. Instead of being an incident or expedient it would be an expressed attribute of the Church itself, which is essential to its own normal perfection, and without which it must remain as a family broken by feuds or a body distracted with deliriums. If the Church had no mission, such unity would be a good thing; and when its mission is fulfilled, it will be the most beautiful and glorious thing in the spiritual universe, even the realized ideal of Pentecost, the marriage supper of the Lamb and the nuptials of the new earth and heaven.

When President Gates speaks of the main argument of the essay his words of praise are so cordial and generous that I regret the more any difference of view, and hope it may, after all, be more verbal than real. As to the practical value of church unity, he will find that it has been referred to, wherever the connection required it, as a remedy for the immense waste, loss and conflict in our denominational charities and missions, for the evils of sectarianism and infidelity and for the social anarchy of our times. In other writings, also, I have more fully shown that without organic unity the Church can never accomplish its mission as the teacher, conservator and regenerator of human society.

It is quite probable that some sincere Christians are not merely inappreciative of church unity, but do not really want it upon any terms. They seem to be still under the influence of anti-church prejudices, inherited from ancestral conflicts with a false ecclesiasticism in the Old World. Anything like a union of denominations in one church system would, in their view, breed such ecclesiasticism in some of its lowest forms. Apparently, there is nothing they dread so much as ecclesiastical politics. It is pleasant to find that Dr. Ward, if taken seriously, does not share such scruples. He proposes to dismiss "ideals" and seize the question as an ecclesiastical politician. He tells us that "it is not a moral or religious question particularly," but "one of practical ecclesiastical politics;" not even an "academical question," but a problem of "ecclesiastical statesmanship." And he has given an example. On behalf of some future Congregational Council he has formulated a new Quadrilateral, in lieu of the four articles known as the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments and the Historic Episcopate. He has not, indeed, devised any new sacred canon, any new catholic creed, any new divine sacrament, any new historic ministry. He has only framed four new abstract propositions to take the place of canon, creed, ritual and polity, as bonds of church unity, and thus supersede the effete wisdom of the Christian ages, as well as the idealistic dreams of surrounding Christendom, by one stroke of the pen of ecclesiastical diplomacy.

I will not say of these propositions what their author has said of the overtures from Chicago and Lambeth, that "they are hardly worth discussing." I will only say that there is no need to discuss them or even to state them. They are the

pleasantries of an ecclesiasticism which can view the question of church unity as neither a moral question nor a religious question, and only as an ecclesiastical question in a political sense.

It is still possible, however, to view it as a moral and religious question. There are those who can view it as a Christian question, even the highest Christian question of our time. And to such idealists it is beginning to appear as a very practical question,—I had almost said, as a question of practical politics in the literal sense. Distant as the reunion of Christendom may be in Greece and Rome, the Greeks and Romans themselves are at our own door, especially the Romans. Hopeless as it might seem to marshal the Salvation Army within the Quadrilateral, there are some Christian bodies almost inside without as yet perceiving it. The historic churches of the Reformation already possess the canon, the creeds, and the sacraments, and are in various stages of reaction toward the Historic Episcopate. Other less ecclesiastical denominations, we may hope, will better appreciate these existing bonds of church unity as they become familiar with them or grow more ecclesiastical in the best sense of the word. Indeed, a few Congregationalists, as well as Presbyterians and Episcopalians, are actually studying the Lambeth proposals and find them intrinsically worthy of consideration, as worthy of consideration as if they had emanated from the Congregational Council or from the Presbyterian Assembly.

Should other denominations act upon Dr. Ward's suggestion, it is quite certain that the Baptist, Congregationalist and Methodist Churches could not construct any platform of church unity

strictly so called, which would be more catholic, practical and hopeful than the Quadrilateral, while the Lutheran, Reformed and Presbyterian Churches could not adopt any other without largely ignoring their own standards and history.

Unless I do Dr. Strong injustice he has fallen into an error common to many who have yet to examine this question carefully. True church unity does not require concession or compromise, but only mutual toleration and fellowship; and the peculiar value of the Historic Episcopate is, that it affords scope as well as basis for such unity. It includes both of the two views of churchmanship which Dr. Strong attributes to it; but it excludes neither of them, and could not exclude either of them without destroying itself. If evangelistic Christians will not tolerate and fellowship with ritualistic Christians in the same church system as they did in the undivided Church of the Apostles, then there may be an end of church unity so far as they are concerned, but the blame of schism will not rest upon their ritualistic fellow-Christians. Baptists and Congregationalists are not asked necessarily to concede immersion and autonomy, nor should they ask their Episcopal brethren to concede the Episcopate as now defined, but be ready to practice tolerance and fraternity with them in the household of faith.

When we pass to the Baptist representatives in the Congregational group we expect to meet difficulties which are doctrinal and ritual in their nature as well as ecclesiastical. And yet the voices which greet us are in the tone of perfect unity. Dr. Boardman is of so generous and catholic a spirit that one wishes to agree with every word that he writes. And,

indeed, the disagreements arise mainly from a mere difference in the point of view. It is not material whether we speak of a "reunion" or of a "unification" of Christendom, if only we perceive that the various communions of the one Apostolic Church, notwithstanding their internal heresies and wrangles, did not excommunicate, unchurch, and disfellowship one another after the fashion of our times, but remained in compact unity until the great schism between the Eastern and Western churches and the greater schisms at the Reformation. Nor can we very well apply our Lord's far-reaching, prophetic prayer to the few trivial disputes among His Apostles and Disciples. If we will only keep ever before us the Pentecostal ideal of church unity we may gladly rejoice with Dr. Boardman in his vivid picture of a membership of denominations, as well as individuals, in the visible body of Christ.

The claims of true unity are also faithfully expressed by Dr. Tyler in his scriptural and spiritual letter. I think, however, that the Christian unity of our churches, though far from being perfect, is already sufficient for the work of church unity; and it will decline rather than increase if allowed to remain as a vague sentiment without some organic expression. If it be true that St. Paul bases Christian unity or spiritual oneness upon Christ alone, yet he also gives us a lively picture of church unity in that structure which is built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Some of us begin to think its unfinished walls and arches may yet find their keystone in the Historic Episcopate. The "Church of the Disciples," which Dr. Tyler represents, faithful to its

liberal spirit, has proposed the Primitive Faith, the Primitive Sacraments, and the Primitive Life as essentials of Christian unity; and for their purpose they are excellent; but for the purpose of church unity strictly, so called, they lack organic force, and ignore the ages of Christian experience and providential training through which the Church has passed since it was instituted by Christ and His Apostles.

On the whole, the Congregationalist utterances are very favorable in their bearing upon Christian unity as requisite to church unity. Since no church unity can be real and lasting which is not thoroughly animated with Christian unity or spiritual oneness, all agencies and associations which practically promote such spiritual oneness ought only to be encouraged and fostered. But it is scarcely conceivable that Christian churches should now find it their duty to wait for the Young Men's Christian Association, the King's Daughters and the societies of Christian Endeavor to start them upon a long career through the successive stages of church co-operation, church federation and church unity. The end may be more directly sought by massing together those churches of the Reformation which represent the conservative forces of historic Christianity, in the hope of acting favorably upon a false ecclesiasticism on the one side as well as upon a crude evangelism on the other.

PRESBYTERIAN OPINIONS.

The Presbyterian voices in this symposium are too few to be fully representative. One of them, however, is clear and strong, and comes from a quarter of the field where the need and practica-

bility of church unity are most apparent. Dr. Reid, of the American Presbyterian Mission in China, faithfully represents the old Presbyterian doctrine of the "Catholic Visible Church," and vindicates the Episcopal proposals as not only generous in their spirit, but adapted to Presbyterian principles and having a unifying quality throughout Christendom.

On a first reading of the able and valuable argument of Dr. Waters, of the Reformed Church, I thought his judgment adverse to the feasibility of the Lambeth articles. But, after examining it more carefully, it seems susceptible of a different construction. While he deems the Apostolic and Nicene creeds insufficient as a statement of the Reformed doctrines, he still admits them to be sufficient as a statement of the common Christian faith of a united church in which different denominations might hold supplementary doctrines not inconsistent with those catholic creeds. The only serious objection which he raises has reference to a particular view of the Historic Episcopate, which is not required by that expression itself, which many Episcopalians as well as Presbyterians repudiate, and which need not, therefore, act as a barrier to the combination of Presbytery and Episcopacy in a united church.

In distinction from Congregationalism, the genius of Presbyterianism is more favorable to church unity than to church federation, which is at best but a half-way measure and often impracticable. The unification of the Presbyterian and Episcopal churches would scarcely any more interfere with vested interests and existing institutions than federation, and would much more strengthen the

cause of church unity than a league of smaller, younger denominations which offer less resistance to the unifying process simply because they are weak in historic and ecclesiastic character. Moreover, we have been trying confederation for a hundred years in Bible, missionary and Sunday School unions, and have found it as inadequate as it proved to be in our political history. It is to be hoped that we are now entering a peaceful era of constitutional union and normal growth.

EPISCOPAL OPINIONS.

The few Episcopal contributors represent nearly all the forms of Episcopacy which are concerned in the question.

It would have been a great advantage had Dr. Crook been able to write more fully as an exponent of Methodist Episcopacy. In his brief note, I think, he falls into the common misapprehension of attributing to the Historic Episcopate a theory of the ministry and sacraments which it does not exclusively require, and he is, therefore, in danger of presenting the Methodist Episcopalian as really more obstructive to church unity than the Protestant Episcopalian.

I shall not be able to do justice to the thoughtful, generous and catholic-hearted paper of Dr. Huntington. Any remaining differences, as he states them, are quite trivial. He is unquestionably right in claiming that the Protestant Episcopal Church now holds the banner of unity in the midst of our divided American Christianity, and is entitled to the leadership by virtue of its English origin, ancestral connections and full ecclesiastical type. But it would need to undergo great constitutional changes before it could incor-

porate with itself such vigorous historic bodies as the Lutheran, Reformed and Presbyterian churches, and it might by such changes depreciate its own churchly character. Nor are those churches likely to surrender their corporate life in an abrupt consolidation, without further organic growth of the latent ecclesiastical qualities which they traditionally possess and are steadily developing. It will be wise to treat them as professed Churches, not as mere individual Christians. The Lutheran Church will probably procure the Swedish Episcopate. The Reformed and Presbyterian churches may be more ripe for the American Episcopate than is now imagined. There is nothing to repel them in consolidation, whether near or far off, as Dr. Huntington depicts it and would allure them toward it. He has said *Nolo episcopari* more than once, but in the ideal United Church of the United States he is already Primate by acclamation.

I need not say that the contribution of Dr. Satterlee shares the same attractive qualities. His appreciative and discriminating analysis of the argument of the essay gives to it new force and clearness which its author had not perceived. In particular, I would emphasize, in his own language, his view of organic growth as a method of unification on the basis of the Lambeth articles: "It is divine and not human; it is natural and not artificial; it is living and not mechanical; it centralizes itself not in any one Christian body but in all of them. Though men may not create it, they can develop it by recognizing and yielding themselves up to this force of spiritual gravitation."

No voice could be more welcome in this Chris-

tian circle than one from the Church which is, in a sense, the mother of us all. Dr. Synnott, in his admirable letter, has impressively set forth that aspect of solid unity presented by an episcopate claiming for its primate succession from St. Peter as the vicar of Christ. The early Protestants could appreciate this appeal better than we do now. Melancthon would have been content to remain under the Papacy had the liberty of evangelical preaching been allowed. Calvin, in the most pathetic terms, resented the charge of Cardinal Sadolet that the Reformers were breaking up the unity of the Church. And since that great rupture passed into history a more Christian spirit has been growing in spite of the bitter controversies which it engendered. When Pius the Ninth, in 1868, by an encyclical letter, affectionately invited all Protestants to return to the Roman communion, the Presbyterian General Assembly returned a courteous response, maintaining that they were not out of the communion of the Catholic Church, since they accepted the doctrinal decisions of the first six Œcumenical Councils, especially those of Nice, Ephesus, Chalcedon and Constantinople, and only rejected certain later innovations. At the present moment also there is among intelligent Protestants an increasing respect for the consistent conservatism of the ancient church amid the abounding unbelief and license of the times. As to the question before us, one main difficulty is that, while the Roman Catholic Church maintains a formal unity within its own pale, it does not exert a unifying potency throughout the rest of the Christian world. Until it has made peace with the oldest Church

in Christendom, the Orthodox Greek Church, its claim to catholic unity will be challenged; and while the newspapers are filled with reports of its own intestine conflicts even Protestant dissensions do not seem so scandalous. The clever picture which Dr. Synnott draws of denominational bishops, like so many trees, plants and shrubs tied to stakes of the same size and kind, might be matched by another in which a divided episcopate and intelligent laity would appear attached to the Papacy by no less precarious ties. Thoughtful observers, without the least disrespect, believe that in this democratic country the Catholic Church is itself undergoing an internal reformation, of which it is not yet fully conscious, and by which it is to be brought into closer agreement with a like reformation which Protestants have already achieved. Should such hidden grounds of reunion ever appear it might not be difficult for communions of European origin to recognize a certain "Historic Primacy" of the Roman See in relation to a truly American Catholic Church.



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